

Campaign Document, No. 2.

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SPEECH OF JUDGE GEO. F. COMSTOCK,

DELIVERED AT THE

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

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FELLOW-CITIZENS : — I do not love the labors of political discussion. But the crisis of a nation has been reached in which no man can be neutral. The differences between political parties are so broad and so fundamental, that there is no middle ground on which hesitation or doubt can linger. Believing that I have no right to be silent, I propose now to address you upon the situation of the country, and the duties of the hour.

And first, let me express my cordial sympathy in the sentiment of enthusiastic approval which has universally greeted the name of the youthful patriot, soldier, and statesman selected to bear our standard in the great civil contest which is to decide the fate of the republic. In George B. McClellan we find the noblest combination of the qualities demanded by the alarming crisis in which the country is placed. As a soldier, I consider him immeasurably first among those who have led our armies in this unhappy and deplorable civil war. I would not tarnish a single one of the laurels earned by other commanders in the field. But the ablest of them must yield to him in genius for supreme command in military combinations, in the comprehensive survey of great campaigns, and, above all, in the qualities which endear him to armies, and inspire in them courage, energy, and hope.

If, therefore, a wise conciliation and prudent statesmanship shall fail to accomplish the object supremely desired by every patriotic heart, to whom can we most safely entrust the power of the nation? If after more than three years of desolating and fruitless war; if, after peaceful effort shall be exhausted, it shall be necessary once more for the Government to exert its military power, once more to clothe itself in the thunders and panoply of war, to whom can

the nation more wisely entrust the command of its fleets and armies than to the humane and Christian hero who twice saved its capital from destruction, and whose conquering march to the capital of the enemy was only arrested by the political hate and fanatical passions which preferred humiliation and defeat to victory under his banner?

But, fellow-citizens, military glories have in them little which can dazzle my vision. I admit that in great national exigencies wars may be justified, after all the instrumentalities of peace have been tried; but I abhor them in the depths of my soul. And I am thankful to the Great Giver of all mercies that in this terrible struggle, which has caused a shudder throughout the civilized world, there is no stain of blood upon my hands. I am grateful to Him that I can look back at the origin, the commencement, and the progress of this war — which I think is the most shocking in the history of nations — without a sense of personal guilt for the unspeakable desolation it has caused. I would not for an empire, nay, I would not for whatever of felicity and power this world contains, be a sharer in that incredible folly, fanaticism, and wickedness which excited and provoked this fearful contest, and which have prolonged the bloody and desolating struggle by arousing a resistance sustained by the energies of despair, and by every motive which can animate the hearts and nerve the arms of men.

I therefore infinitely prefer to present our candidate for the suffrage of the American people, not as a military hero, but as a statesman who grasps the political not less than the military situation; as a civilian accomplished in knowledge, as a patriot who not only understands but loves the institutions of his country;



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as a Christian gentleman of pure and spotless character, upon whose record there is no stain or reproach. So far as the thoughts and wishes of any human being can be known to others, we know it to be his passionate desire to see the laws of this country peacefully obeyed throughout its whole extent, and all the States once more bound together in fraternal Union, based upon the proper sovereignty and equal rights of each one of them. This great purpose of his soul breathes in the varied productions of his pen, with which you are familiar. It shines conspicuously in the fervid burning patriotism of his letter from Harrison's Landing, written in the midst of perils which threatened his destruction. And need I refer to that noble letter of acceptance, that chaste and beautiful exposition of his principles, which has been received by the acclamations of a people, which, like the blast of a trumpet, has awakened the echoes of the hills, the mountains, and the valleys of our country? We proudly present him to you, fellow-citizens, not merely as the able soldier and consummate military commander, but as a patriot of unalterable devotion to the Union which you love. We present him, above all, as the statesman endowed with the exact comprehension of the nature of our government and the political situation of the country, without which the terrible agencies of war are powerless to save the union of the States, or preserve society from the fathomless gulf of anarchy to which it is rapidly tending.

Fellow-citizens: I have no blind devotion to any political party; but wherever free institutions exist, party names and organizations are a necessity of human nature and human society. A nation is now to be saved or lost, and the peace of thirty millions of people is to be restored or forever destroyed by the influence and action of one party or another upon the theories and practices of government in this country. In a crisis of such fearful import, while truth and candor should be observed, the utmost freedom and latitude of discussion are both a duty and a right.

I speak first of the Democratic party. It has proclaimed as the first and fundamental article in its creed the Federal Union of all the States. The great national council at Chicago, speaking in its name, and by its authority, has declared that in all circumstances, and under all conditions in the future, as in the past, we adhere "*with unswerving fidelity*" to the national Union. Such a declaration, coming from the assembled Democracy of the nation, and approved by all the enlightened conservatism of the country, has no doubtful meaning. It means the Union of the States under the limitations of a written constitution or compact, into which the States enter as coequal sovereignties, and with equal dignity and rights. It does not mean the impossible unity and consolidation of the people of this continent, under a single empire or republic, but a constitutional alliance of states or republics, presenting them as one nation to the other powers of the earth,

while reserving to each the supreme control over its local affairs and domestic institutions. Such is the Union established by our forefathers. Such is the Union to which "unswerving fidelity" is pledged by the Democratic party, and to which our candidate will devote in the future, as in the past, all the faculties of his nature and all the energies of his soul.

But I rejoice with unspeakable joy in the pledge, now given to the nation by the second article of our Platform, that first of all, the blessed influences of peace and conciliation are to be invoked to reunite the sundered and alienated fragments of our once glorious Union. For more than three years this terrible and fruitless contest of arms has carried mourning and grief, desolation and ruin, over the land. The awful waste of human life; the fearful demands upon the country made by the jesting and fiddling Nero at Washington for new victims of battle and disease; the smoke of burning cities and towns blackening the sky; the shrieks of the wounded and dying daily ascending from fields of slaughter to the God of peace; all these appeal with resistless eloquence and power for a cessation of arms, and for one great and noble effort to accomplish a peaceful adjustment of this horrid controversy. To such an effort we are pledged, and it is the noblest pledge which a political convention ever gave to a people. It is the first ray of light which has penetrated the surrounding gloom. I can see in it the rainbow of promise stretched across the storm, giving to us hopes of future security and repose.

And why, let me ask, in the name of that peaceful and holy religion which we profess, in the name of the Divine Instructor who said to his followers, "Blessed are the peace-makers," why should we not arrest the devouring flames of war? why should we continue to swell the tide of human slaughter without one effort for a peaceful arrangement of the strife? That we cannot fight always, and that negotiation in some form must at last terminate the struggle, is a truth so obvious that no one will call it in question. And if this be true, then, in the name of our common humanity, let us negotiate now, if honorable negotiation is possible. Let us now invoke the white-robed angel of peace to descend between the contending hosts and arrest the conflict, and let the still, small voice of reason and conscience be heard, instead of the roar of arms, the thunder of cannon, and the murderous rattle of musketry.

Fellow-citizens: I propose on this, and on other occasions, before the assemblies of the people, to stand as one of the accusers of the opposing political party, and of the man who, as its candidate for the highest office in the nation, represents its principles and purposes. I impeach them for high crimes and misdemeanors against the Constitution, and against the peace and order of society—crimes and misdemeanors which ought forever to forfeit the confidence of a free, a humane, and a Christian people.



Scarcely more than eight years ago the Republican party arose in one section of the Union, and cast its ominous shadow over the whole republic. After little more than four years of reckless agitation, of reckless appeal to all that is bigoted and fanatical in human nature, it attained to power by the votes of little more than one third of the people of all the States, and Abraham Lincoln became the President of the United States. That was the saddest day in all our history. Less than four years' actual possession of power have sufficed to accomplish the ruin of the country. If the providence of God had sent upon this nation the calamities of pestilence and famine; if the destroying angel had spread his wings over it, the desolation could not have been more complete. Among the net results of this brief but disastrous domination of a new-born party are nearly a million of lives, sacrificed to the Moloch of abolition philanthropy, not less than three thousand millions of federal, state, and municipal debt; and taxation present and prospective, such as no people ever suffered, and which must be endured from age to age, unless the nation sinks into bankruptcy and repudiation. To these may be added the destruction of property beyond all the powers and means of calculation, cities and towns consigned to the flames, vast tracts of the country once inhabited by a prosperous and happy people, desolated and destroyed, and above all the fires of implacable hate planted in the bosoms of millions of American citizens.

With this fearful record, this record of humiliation and calamity, a record which time cannot blot out, which ages of repentance cannot wash away, the same political organization, now, demands a new lease of power. Its leaders and guides exhibit no change of heart or purpose. Instead of repenting in dust and ashes for the mischief and desolation they have brought upon the country, instead of calling upon the rocks and the mountains to cover them from the wrath of the people they have betrayed, instead of penitential gratitude to heaven that they have not been consumed by its lightnings and blasted by its thunder-bolts, the leaders of this party, I say, with an incredible assurance, demand four years longer to revel in the desolation they have made. And even Abraham Lincoln, chosen as a constitutional magistrate, clothed with the highest of all human trusts, that of protecting and defending the Constitution, with his solemn oath of office trampled in the dust, with the Constitution bleeding under his feet—Abraham Lincoln, the very architect of ruin, now reaches forth his hands for the imperial purple. I say the imperial purple, because I know if many years of devoted study of the Constitution and laws of my country have taught me anything, that, under a baseless and groundless pretence of military necessity, he has administered the government of this country upon the theories and doctrines of a pure and simple despotism, unre-

strained by a single principle of constitutional liberty and law. And if this people shall now acquiesce in his vast and stupendous assumption of power; if, in the madness of the hour, if, struck with worse than judicial blindness, they shall once more intrust power to his hands, it will be a deliberate abandonment of the Constitution, it will be national suicide, and the throne of Abraham will be more despotic than those of the princes or potentates of the old world.

I arraign the Republican party and its chief because they did not, and would not, when they could, save the country from the revolution which has overwhelmed it. I impeach them because, in the phrensy of partisan passion and fanatical haste to *save a platform*, they rushed upon the ruin of a nation. I here and now assert, what is capable of the most exact and demonstrative proof, that, even before Mr. Lincoln and his associates were installed in the actual possession of power before the inaugural ceremony, the salvation of the country was in their hands, and it might have been saved by a moderate and just concession which did not involve the liberty, the welfare, the honor, or the happiness of a single human being. Who does not remember the breathless suspense in which the nation stood between the election and the inauguration of the new President? Who does not remember that while the distant storm was gathering and the thunders were muttering, when the very earth was trembling with the first throes of revolution, the compromise of the patriot Crittenden came with healing on its wings? And let the truth be now proclaimed to the everlasting condemnation of those who rejected this healing measure, that it yielded nothing to Southern feeling and rights except a rock-bound territory which contained less than fifty slaves. Nor was this a concession, because it was less than a constitutional right solemnly affirmed by the supreme judicial tribunal of the nation. The evidence is overwhelming, nor is it even disputed, that if this measure had been adopted rebellion would not have reared its crest, the Union would have been preserved, and the nation saved. In vain were Lincoln and Seward and Chase and Sumner appealed to by an anxious people to approve a compromise which Jefferson Davis and Toombs and Hunter and Mason were willing to accept. Not a single Republican vote could it obtain in the Senate of the United States. History affords no example of such reckless disregard of the public welfare, of such total abnegation of statesmanship, as the Republican leaders exhibited in that great crisis pregnant with the fate of the nation. Nor has the world ever seen such a sublime assurance as that which again demands a continuation of power in the blood-stained hands of men who deliberately chose the ruin of their country in preference to the surrender of a senseless and mischievous partisan dogma.

I arraign the Republican party, and I



arraign Abraham Lincoln, because, when entrusted by a patriotic people with the control of great armies and boundless resources, they have wielded them, and are now wielding them in violation of solemn pledges made to the whole nation, in violation of the most sacred constitutional obligations, and for the destruction, instead of the salvation, of the Union. I know the full meaning and gravity of this impeachment. But the whole history of the Administration will prove its literal and exact truth.

Let us recall the pledges under which this Administration commenced its inglorious career. On the solemn occasion of the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Lincoln, not wholly insensible to the public danger, and anxious to bring to his support all parties in the North, made the emphatic declaration that he had neither "the intention nor the lawful right" to interfere with the laws and institutions of the States, and that the maintenance of the "right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, was essential to the perfection and endurance of our political fabric." At the period when this declaration was made, seven of the States had passed ordinances of secession. If, by their attempt to withdraw from the Union, State sovereignty and rights were forfeited and lost, the President of the United States had not yet made the discovery. The doctrine thus enunciated by him, founded as it is in the fundamental limitations of the Constitution, was universally acquiesced in and approved by his political opponents.

And we find a pledge not less imposing, given by the legislative branch of the government, which was also under the complete control of the Republican party. In the month of July, 1861, the withdrawal of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas had completed the circle of secession, and we stood in the midst of the realities of war. The disastrous defeat of Bull Run had somewhat humbled the Republican chiefs, and they desired to rally the whole people to the support of the Administration in the contest with the rebellion which they had provoked. Congress, therefore, passed with extraordinary unanimity a resolution which the President approved, declaring in precise and exact terms that the war was prosecuted "with no purpose of disturbing the domestic institutions of the States, but to maintain the Constitution and preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the States unimpaired, and that as soon as these objects should be accomplished the war ought to cease."

Such were the pledges given to the nation by Mr. Lincoln and his party. They were accepted by a united North, and they saved to the Union the powerful States of Kentucky and Missouri, which otherwise were lost. They were received with especial satisfaction by the great army of loyal and conservative men, who had profoundly distrusted the purpose of the Re-

publican party. Throughout the length and breadth of the land Democrats rallied to the support of a government administered by men not of their choice. If those pledges were given to deceive the country with a great and desolating war, to be prosecuted for the purpose of subjugating States to the imperial will of the President and his party, and overthrowing their institutions and laws, no language can describe the utter infamy of that deception. If, on the other hand, they were honestly given, then, in the name of our violated Constitution, in the name of Christian civilization and humanity, I ask why should they not be honestly kept?

The world has never witnessed such an astounding breach of faith as that exhibited in the violation by Mr. Lincoln and his party of those solemn and imposing pledges. Relying upon them, a loyal and patriotic people contributed mighty fleets and armies, poured out their treasure and shed their blood like water. How have they been kept? Solemnly committed to the preservation of the Union under the Constitution, and to the restoration of the States with all their dignity and rights, one of the first lawless acts of the President and Congress was the dismemberment of the great State of Virginia, and the creation of a new State out of her territory. Tell me, you Republican doctors of law, if you have ever read the Constitution, where is your authority for this stupendous usurpation and wrong? Do you not know, and did you not know when the wrong was committed, that by an explicit provision of the Constitution no State shall be divided, nor any new State erected out of its territory without its consent? I wish to speak with all the moderation that becomes me, but I shall be false to my convictions, I do not charge this usurpation as if a wicked and deliberate violation of a fundamental provision of the Constitution. And how, let me ask, is Virginia, the mother of States, to be restored to the Union with her original dignity and rights, while her territory is dismembered and her unity destroyed? Suppose, to-day, you ask her rebellious people to lay down their arms and bring back their State to the embraces of the Union, under the Constitution. They must answer, you have dismembered our State in violation of the Constitution, and thrown up an insuperable barrier to the Union you profess to desire. Such is the Republican mode of maintaining the Constitution and restoring the States to their places in the Union.

Passing now to other usurpations, if possible, still more revolutionary and alarming. I suppose the humblest mind can comprehend the constitutional *status* and legal consequences of rebellion. Rebellion is simply treason against the government of the Union. Treason is an offence defined by the Constitution, and like all other offences against the government, can be punished only by indictment and trial in the civil courts, and before a jury of the State or district in which the crime is committed. Such



is the letter of the Constitution. Treason cannot be the offence of a State or political society. You cannot indict a State. You cannot imprison, banish, or hang it, or subject it to any conceivable punishment or forfeiture. I appeal to the bar of this country, I appeal to Republican lawyers and jurists, to say if I am not right.

Take, for illustration, even the consolidated government of a single State. If a large number, a majority, or even all, of the inhabitants of a county should rebel against the State government, each individual would be guilty of treason, and subject to trial by jury for his crime, nor could be punished in any other manner. The traitors may be dispersed, wounded, or slain in battle, if they offer armed and organized resistance. But this is not the constitutional idea of punishment. No one can fail to see that the county itself remains an integral portion of the State, and cannot be punished, forfeited, or lost; certainly not if fixed and established as a political division by the State constitution or organic law.

The illustration is feeble, because the States are not an emanation from the federal government. On the contrary, the States created, and, in their union, now compose that government. The only doctrine, however, which can be opposed to the right of secession, is that the States are unchangeably fixed in the Union by the constitutional compact, as the planets are fixed in their orbits around the sun by an irreversible law of nature, and can no more depart from the Union than a planet can fly into the boundless regions of space. If this is not true, then by secession the States are effectually, to all intents whatever, out of the Union, and none of their citizens can be guilty of treason. Then Jefferson Davis is not a traitor to the government of the United States. Then the Constitution is simply a treaty which may be annulled at pleasure. Tell me again, Republican judges and lawyers, if this is not so?

Now the States, in a constitutional sense, being perpetually members of the Union, and the national government having jurisdiction and sovereignty over all their inhabitants for the special purposes limited and defined in the Constitution, the results are inevitable. First, the contest of this government is not with itself, is not with its own component parts, is not with the States, or their reserved political sovereignty and rights, but is with the treasonable persons who, in great numbers, resist the limited and defined sovereignty of the federal government, and oppose the execution of its laws. Second, when that opposition ceases the work is done, the mission of government is accomplished, unless the judicial power proceeds, by indictment and trial according to constitutional forms, to arraign and punish the offending individuals who have been engaged in the insurrection. I say the work is done. The Union does not need, nor can it possibly have, any other salvation. The States do not need, nor can they possibly have, any other restora-

tion. The Union remains, and the States remain. The noble structure of our government is always constitutionally perfect and complete. It is complete not only in theory, but in practice also, over all the confederacy, the very instant that resistance ceases to its just and constitutional laws. Every other doctrine beside this imputes imperfection to our government, and inevitably terminates either in revolution or in the lawful and peaceful secession of States.

If these principles are true,—and I appeal to you again, Republican lawyers, to tell me if they are not, they pronounce the utter and everlasting condemnation of Mr. Lincoln and his advisers, and of the party which owns him as its chief and its candidate. I arraign them all because in direct and palpable violation of those principles which underlie the entire fabric of liberty and law in this country, they have enacted bills of attainder, confiscation of property, and punishment without the process or trial which the Constitution requires. The entire population of the Southern States are already sentenced without trial by sweeping statutes of Congress, inflicting universal confiscation and deprivation of the right of citizenship. I cannot pause to enumerate them all. One of them, not more atrocious than others, disqualifies the entire male population of the South forever from holding office under the government unless by test oath unknown to the Constitution, and in direct violation of it, they can show that they have never had any connection with the existing rebellion. Now who does not know that this is an utter disfranchisement of the people of eleven States of this Union? And who is so ignorant as not to understand that this is one of the forms of punishment for crime which can only be inflicted by the tribunals of justice and the verdict of a jury? Who does not know that the united power of the President and Congress can not lawfully touch, in this manner, the rights of a single citizen of this country! How vast, how astonishing, then, is the usurpation which sweeps to destruction the property and rights of millions of citizens by presidential and legislative edicts having no foundation in constitutional law, but yet to be enforced by the soldiers and bayonets entrusted by a confiding people to the chief magistrate of this nation!

And this is Republican doctrine for restoring the Union! Did madness and folly ever reach such astonishing heights? Is a Union of the States possible or conceivable unless you have in them a population clothed with the common rights of citizenship? Can Virginia or Georgia be a member of the Union if inhabited by an alien population, without rights as citizens of the United States? Republicans! I ask you to pause and reflect. Can you, by such a policy, restore the States or their people to their allegiance? Let me tell you that battles and sieges and blockades may be persuasive arguments to bring back



an insurgent people to the mild and just authority of the Constitution and the laws; but battles and sieges and blockades will never bring them to you in the dust of humiliation; will never subject to your authority, as abject servants or slaves, a brave and powerful people.

I know that among the horrid delusions propagated by Republican orators and papers, is the astounding fallacy that the people of the South having withdrawn from the Union, are not entitled to the protection of the Constitution. But if we are Union men, we necessarily affirm that they cannot withdraw from the Union nor emancipate themselves from the unchangeable law of the Constitution. Whoever says more or less than this rejects the Union and rejects the Constitution. If we accept the secession postulate that the Union is dissolved and the Constitution abrogated, then we have no cause of war, no motive for its continuance. Then our armies ought to be instantly withdrawn and the tide of human slaughter arrested. If not for the sake of our Constitution, and our whole Constitution, why are we engaged in this desolating strife? Why do we wrap a continent in the devastating flames of war? Why do we enact scenes at which humanity and civilization are compelled to shudder? Republicans! do you not say that rebels ought everywhere to submit themselves to the Constitution? But do you mean less than the *whole Constitution*, with all its authority and all its protection? Will you divide it in two portions, and maintain the one while you destroy the other? Will you demand the submission required, and yet withdraw the protection afforded by the same great instrument? Do you say that rebellion shall yield to the supreme law, and deny to the rebel the citizenship and the rights to which the same law entitles him? I pray you look your doctrine in the face, and let us away with such monstrous, such destructive fallacies.

These vast assumptions of power take their origin in a fanaticism, folly, and hatred to the incomprehensible, or else they flow from deliberate and wicked desire and intention to drive away forever a disfranchised people from the embraces of the Union and the Constitution. But the usurpation by Mr. Lincoln and his administration, of unlimited authority over States, their institutions, constitutions, and laws, are yet more fatal and revolutionary. To these I briefly invite your attention.

I have shown that if the Union is a perpetual government, if secession is not a constitutional right, the States are unalterably fixed as members of the Union, and the mission of our national government is not to subjugate itself, or the States of which it is composed, by simply and solely to quell resistance and execute everywhere its constitutional laws. Now, if there is one principle more than any other which lies at the very foundation of our Union, which is the very corner-stone of our

noble political structure, which determined the rights of the citizen, and even the character of civilization and society in this country, it is the constitutional partition of power between the Federal and the State governments. It is known to and admitted by all persons having the most moderate degree of political knowledge, that the States, being in the possession of separate sovereignty and rights before the formation of our federal government, entered by compact into a national Union, and transferred to that Union certain specified powers for national purposes, but reserved all other sovereignty and rights to themselves. That compact was the Constitution of the United States, separately agreed to by each of the States, and if to-day this Constitution is not the national government, then we have no such government, for no other national government has ever been established in this country.

These principles, too trite and familiar to be disputed,—these principles being admitted, it is nothing else than revolution and anarchy to attempt to overthrow the partition of sovereignty, or obliterate the line which divides the functions and powers of the States from the functions and powers of the federal government. If the people of the States attempt to resume the powers granted to the Union, it is revolution. If the Union oversteps the line and invades the rights and powers of the States, it is also revolution; and I say to you, fellow-citizens, this is the very revolution which is now shaking the pillars of government and society in this country.

If secession is not a constitutional right, then we arraign Jefferson Davis and his Confederate States for a revolutionary attempt to overthrow the powers granted by those States to the government of the Union. If the Union is perfect and all the States which compose it are equal, as necessarily they are in dignity and rights, we arraign Abraham Lincoln for the kindred treason of overleaping the sacred line traced by the Constitution itself, which divides the powers of government and sovereignty, and invading the domain of State sovereignty and rights, with the revolutionary purpose of reorganizing society and overthrowing the constitutions and laws of eleven States of this Union. Jefferson Davis is the revolutionist of the South, but Jefferson Davis is not within the reach of my voice or my vote. Abraham Lincoln is the revolutionist and anarchist of the North, and he demands your suffrages and mine. Both of them must be removed from power before the Union can be restored and the blessings of peace once more descend upon this unhappy country.

In proof of the revolutionary design of Mr. Lincoln, I refer to the most authentic and imposing records of his administration. The first great act which signalized his betrayal of the Constitution and of the principles and pledges under which the country had united in his support, was the Proclamation of Eman-



cipation, in which, by a single stroke of his pen, suddenly enfranchised four millions of helpless human beings and overthrew the constitutions and laws of the States under which they were held in servitude; and this imperial edict was attended by a pledge of the army and navy under his command to maintain it forever. It is not material what name we give to this proceeding. It may be called a military order, a political decree, or an imperial release. Its name does not alter its character. Nor will its character be changed by any of the pretences for its justification. In any and all aspects its exact letter and meaning were, and its undoubted effect is, provided it be a constitutional exercise of power, to emancipate every slave in the States to which it applied, and to abrogate forever the laws of those States. But you say it was an unconstitutional act, and therefore void and of no effect. And precisely this is what I affirm, and this is the very ground of my impeachment. It was a vast revolutionary step for which the President had no shadow of authority in the Constitution. It was a step which the revolutionists and radicals who hold him in their keeping will never permit him to revoke, and which in his latest message to Congress he has declared he never will revoke. For the enforcement of that decree the usurper is now wielding half a million of bayonets under the false pretence of a war for the Union of the States. It is a war against the Union of the States, because there is no lawful Union except under the Constitution, and based on the equal dignity and rights of each one of them.

That I do not misinterpret the design of Mr. Lincoln or the meaning of this extraordinary decree, is proved with absolute demonstration by his so-called "amnesty," or plan of reconstructing the seceding States, and restoring them to the Union. Now this "plan" is not a mere theory without practical consequence or result. Under it, two spurious States have sprung into being, whose votes are expected to be given to the author of their existence. Other spurious States are to arise in the track of our armies, and take the place on the now existing States of the Union.

This grotesque and crude conception of Mr. Lincoln is, therefore, a terrible reality, and not merely a hideous conceit of his brain. He adheres to it with such tenacity, that he refused to sanction a plan of Congress, equally unconstitutional, but less absurd than his own. It is a plan which proceeds on the monstrous doctrine that the States are in some sense out of the Union, that their constitutions and laws are forfeited, their State sovereignty gone, and that he, the imperial sovereign at Washington, may force upon them new constitutions and laws. It assumes that all the citizens of the rebellious States are already, without trial or conviction, in the situation of convicts and outlaws, to whom a pardon is necessary in order to be restored to the rights of citizenship. This par-

don the considerate and merciful dictator extends to so many of them as will take an oath to support his proclamation of emancipation, and all proclamations which he may issue. All other persons are outlawed, although they may be willing to lay down their arms, and return to the true allegiance which they owe to the Union. So soon as one-tenth part of the voting population have taken the oath, a new State may be organized, with a free constitution, to be received by the President into the Union. The existing constitutions of the States are necessarily abrogated, and nine-tenths of the people who will not obey the imperial behest, and take the degrading oath, are not left in the enjoyment of a single right of citizenship, not even the sacred right of suffrage.

Time does not permit to me a further discussion of the mighty issues now to be determined. We have a noble mission before us—the restoration of peace, and the salvation of the country. There is revolution, there is war, interminable, cruel, and exhausting war, in the policy against which we protest. There are bright pledges of peace and a Union saved and restored in the candidates we present and the principles we profess. Let good men, then, rally to our standard.

We know the enlightened sentiment of the people is with us, and we believe its unrestrained expression will result in the triumph of our cause. But we must be equal to all the duties that may be cast upon us. We know also that the usurper has his armed heel upon the freeman's right of suffrage. Let him be warned in time. If our candidate is fairly chosen, and yet the nation shall be defrauded of its will by the presence and exercise of military power, in whatever place, then, so surely as the throne of justice is established in the heavens, the people will take George B. McClellan in their arms, and will bear him over and through all opposition to the Capitol in Washington, and there inaugurate him as the constitutional President of this republic.

If any one shall say that I have overstated this extraordinary, this revolutionary scheme, I say to him, go to the record and there you will find it. You will find it in the resulting bogus States of Louisiana and Arkansas. You will find it on the blood-stained fields of Florida, where an army was sacrificed to put it in force. So far as we can know, the President adheres to it with a fixed tenacity of purpose, and he has told us that he does not propose to abandon it. Four years more he now asks to carry forward this revolution of States upon which he has entered. For this his mandate issues for five hundred thousand more men. For this the nation is tottering on the verge of bankruptcy and ruin.

And when are we to have peace and repose? The country was struck with needless astonishment at Mr. Lincoln's recent manifesto, "To all whom it may concern," declaring not merely the Union, but also "the aban-



donment of slavery," as one of the conditions of peace. What else could he say without revoking his proclamation, which he has told us he never will revoke? What else could he say, without recalling his "amnesty" and annulling the baseless political organizations which he has already called into existence, and which he tells us he cannot abandon?

What less could he say without rejecting the platform of the political convention which has nominated him for re-election, and which he says he "*cordially accepts*," a platform which explicitly declares the abolition of slavery as one of the objects of this desolating and exterminating war?

And now over and against this manifesto of Lincoln, ominous of eternal war, let me place the noble words of McClellan, which may well be written on the sky, "**THE UNION IS THE ONE CONDITION OF PEACE; WE ASK NO MORE.**" And, fellow-citizens, we have no right to ask more. If the States are in the Union under the Constitution, or if we demand their return to the Union under the Constitution, then the great instrument we seek to uphold forbids us to ask more. If they are out of the Union, according to the wild and fantastic theories of some of the most eminent Republican leaders, then the rebellious States are to us a foreign nation, and by

the public law of the world, as well as the eternal rules of justice, their independence ought to be respected; and whether inside or outside of the Constitution, we have no more right to invade their soil, to change their customs and laws than we have to invade Brazil to abolish slavery, or the empire of Turkey to abolish polygamy.

It is time to awaken the slumbering conscience of the nation to the moral aspects and duties of the crisis. Are there no moral tests which ought to determine the conduct of a Christian people? Have the eternal standards of right and wrong perished in the roar of arms and the whirlwind of revolution? Tell me you ministers of a peaceful religion—tell me, you disciples of Him whose mission on earth was peace and good-will to men, where is your commission to make war, except for the Constitution and laws as they are? Where is your authority to invade other communities and States with desolation and fire in the track of your armies, not to enforce the laws, but to make new laws for them? Such a war, let me say to you, never ought to succeed, and it never can succeed, while a single arm can be raised to defend firesides and homes, or repel an invasion which has no sanction, human or divine.

## WATCHWORDS FOR PATRIOTS

Mottoes for the Campaign, selected from General McClellan's Writings.

The true issue for which we are fighting is the preservation of the Union and upholding the laws of the general government. — *Instructions to General Burnside, January 7, 1862.*

We are fighting solely for the integrity of the Union, to uphold the power of our national government, and to restore to the nation the blessings of peace and good order. — *Instructions to General Halleck, November 11, 1861.*

You will please constantly to bear in mind the precise issue for which we are fighting; that issue is the preservation of the Union and the restoration of the full authority of the general government over all portions of our territory. — *Instructions to General Buell, November 7, 1861.*

We shall most readily suppress this rebellion and restore the authority of the government by religiously respecting the constitutional rights of all. — *Instructions to General Buell, Nov. 7, 1861.*

Be careful so to treat the unarmed inhabitants as to contract, not widen, the breach existing between us and the rebels. — *Instructions to General Buell, November 12, 1861.*

I have always found that it is the tendency of subordinates to make vexatious arrests on mere suspicion. — *Instructions to General Buell, November 12, 1861.*

Say as little as possible about politics or the negro. — *Instructions to General Burnside, January 7, 1862.*

The unity of this nation, the preservation of our institutions, are so dear to me that I have willingly sacrificed my private happiness with the single object of doing my duty to my country. — *Letter to Secretary Cameron, October, 1861.*

Whatever the determination of the government may be, I will do the best I can with the Army of the Potomac, and will share its fate, whatever may be the task imposed upon me. — *Letter to Secretary Cameron, October, 1861.*

Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organization of States, nor forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment. — *Letter to President Lincoln, July 7, 1862.*